



**Robert Land
Academy**
LOYALIST
November, 2023



WELCOME

This issue of The Loyalist marks a major change from the monthly newsletter of the recent past. The Loyalist is now the product of RLA's Newsletter/Yearbook Club and is largely student driven. Members of the club, Nick Thompson and Nathaniel Campbell, have put in a lot of work coming up with a redesign of the Loyalist and hope you find it interesting and engaging.

FINISH READING ON PG 5

MOTHER SON DAY

Mother Son Day is a time for students to bond with their mothers and share their favorite RLA activities with them.

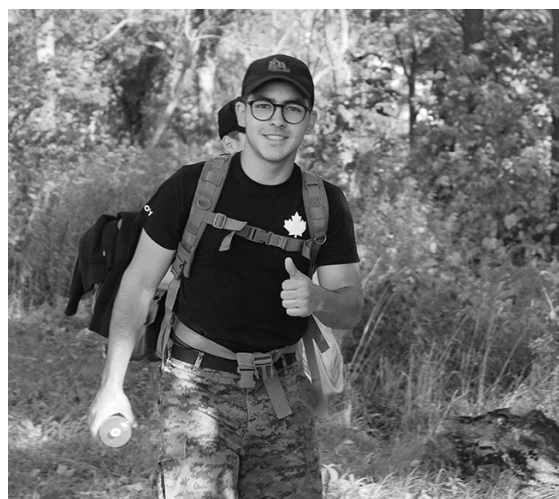
FINISH READING ON PAGE 2



THE FALL EXERCISE

What Does a 70 km march have to do with someone's education?

FINISH READING ON PAGE 3



CROSS COUNTRY

The Robert Land Academy cross country team has completed a challenging and memorable season, culminating in their journey to the SOSSA competition.

FINISH READING ON PAGE 6





MOTHER SON

DAY NOVEMBER 4

By Nathaniel Campbell

Double Barman Jenkins used the word “fulfilling” when describing Mother Son Day. “I like doing fun stuff with my mom,” said Jenkins. He added It is very special to spend time with his mom and how he’s grateful for everything she has done for him.

Mother son day is new to the school, it was introduced in 2021. There was only Father Son Day before COVID. Mother Son Day is filled with fun activities such as rock climbing, painting and much more. For Mother Son Day this year Robert Land Academy is planning to do a breakfast brunch buffet. For this event there are six awards to win for the best mom-son team in each activity. Awards will be given for Educated Escapists, Sharpest Shooters, Painting Proteges, Writing Warriors, Climbing Kings and Slick Scientists.

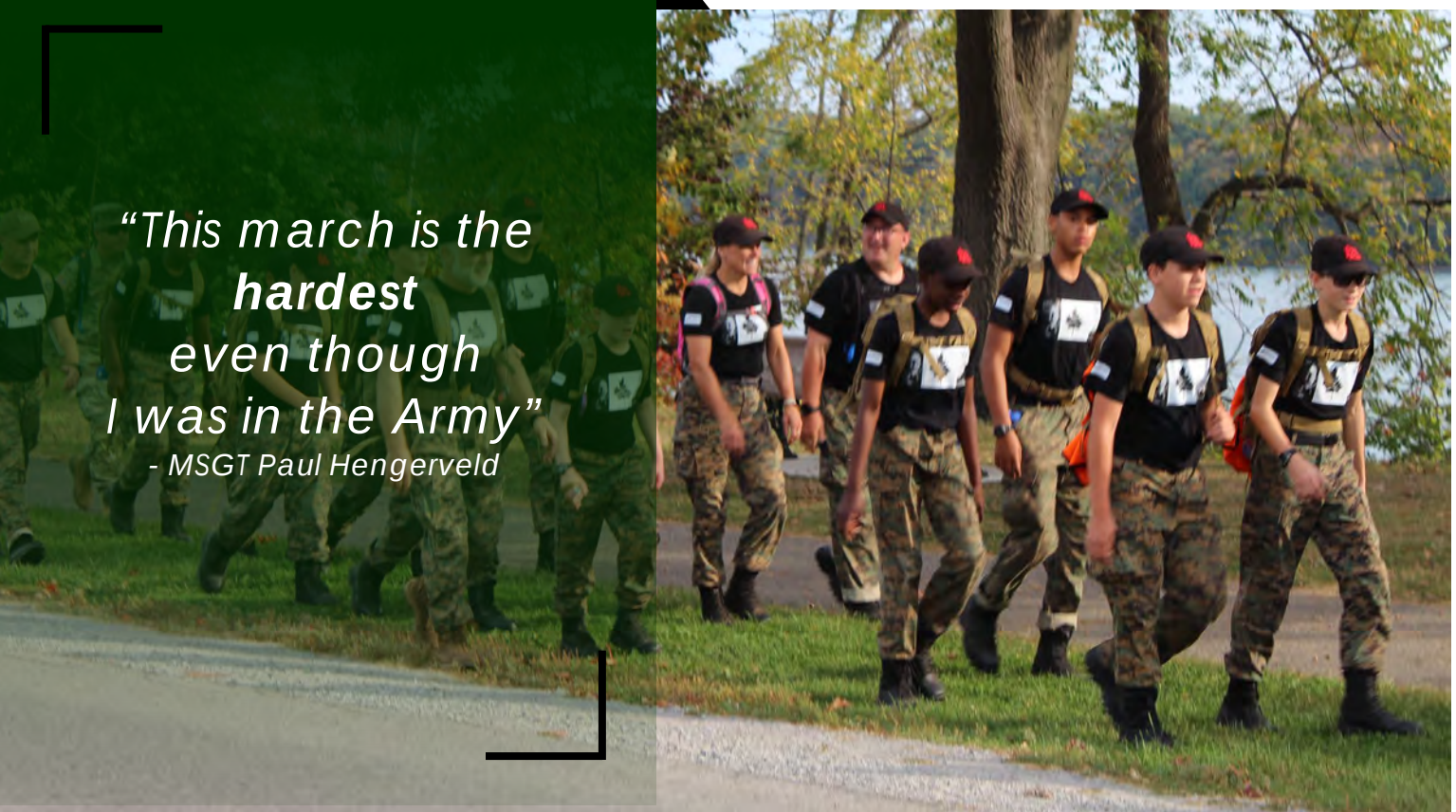
Jenkins said his favorite event is the Airsoft target shooting because his mom is an experienced shooter, and it was fun to watch her shoot and see how good she is.

Two Cadets in A Coy got interviewed and shared their point

of view on Mother Son Day. Cadet Bundas was asked what does Mother Son Day mean to you? He stated “It’s a time to have fun with my mom where activities are different each year. Cadet Powless was asked the same question and he replied “It’s nice to have a fun time with my mother and finally see her in a little while.”

Our Deputy Headmaster Major Simmons was recently asked the question “why was there no mother son day until two years ago?” Major Simmons replied with the answer saying “formerly there was an emphasis on helping boys have more meaningful relationships with fathers. However, a boy’s relationship with his mother is equally important. So, we are looking for opportunities for students to form strong relationships with their parents and guardians.” He also used the word “connection” when describing Mother Son Day.

In conclusion, there are no requirements for mother son day all you need to do is bring your A game!



***"This march is the
hardest
even though
I was in the Army"***
- MSGT Paul Hengerveld

The Fall Exercise

The only exercise like it completed by any military school

By: Nick Thompson

"This march is the hardest even though I was in the Army" - MSGT Paul Hengerveld

"Robert Land is the only Academy who does this march across any Military school and it's completion to young youth is proving people can do anything" SM Patrick McKaughan

"By The Time it was over my mindset changed and I knew I was capable of doing anything"- MMA Cadet Aiden Renfrow

What does a 70 km march have to do with someone's education? It proves to them that they are able to go beyond their personal goals and set them above standard and find new ways to encourage themselves and others in their group.

The Fall Exercise (Fall Ex) is a march over three days that is 70km long and the toughest event any Robert Land Academy Cadet will go through.

This year Lt Wielink and Lt Ahlshedt won the fall event in 9 hours and 34 minutes over two days of being timed, which beat Admissions Officer Major Troy Krywulak's time set three years ago,

Major Krywulak explained the Fall Ex as "a physically, emotionally, mentally, and socially demanding event. But that's purposeful. Students learn they can overcome challenges and do difficult things. That skill can transfer into many aspects of your life, including the classroom."

The Fall Exercise is a big event outside of the school community, too. Cadets from military schools in the United States, including Oak Ridge Military Academy (ORMA) and Massanutten Military Academy (MMA), travel to Canada, stay at the Academy, and compete in the event. The Academy is fortunate to have soldiers from the New Mexico National Guard (NMNG) and cadets from the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) attend and participate as well. The March takes place in early October and starts on the Bruce trail for a 33km hike on day one and ends on day three with a 12 km hike into Queenston Heights.

Continue Reading Next Page



Former headmaster LCol Ryan Smid, whose memory was honoured by the Alumni who participated during this year's march, has said "The annual fall exercise is one of the crown jewels of the RLA program and has been since its inception in 1978. For many of the boys it serves as the first time where they accomplish something truly difficult that they didn't think they were capable of doing.

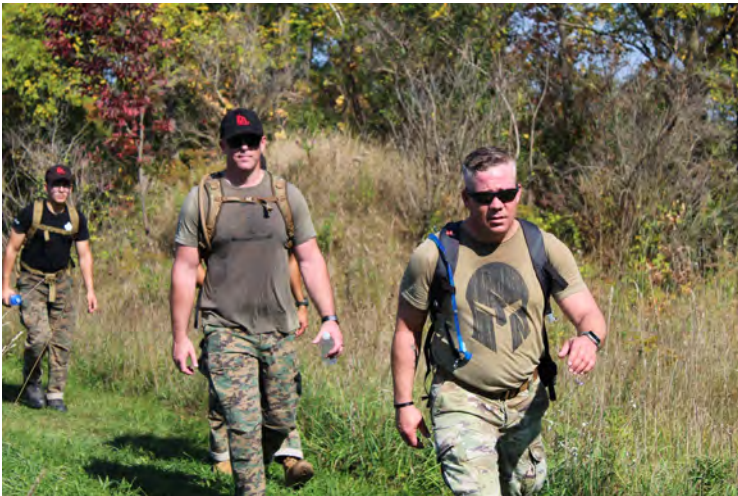
I spoke with some of the guests who have taken part in the exercise and asked for their advice to anyone contemplating completing the exercise.

MMA Cadet Captain Xie notes the importance of keeping a strong pace and maintaining a pace that is doable for the group for all three days. She notes that it's important to pace yourself as she was exhausted by the end of day one and didn't know how long she had left on the march.

"Enjoy every aspect of the experience and keep your head up and focus your attention elsewhere rather than listening to your mind telling you to quit," says MMA Cadet Baldwin, noting the importance of continuing the march no matter what you're thinking as the exercise will make you want to quit from day one to day three.

MMA Cadet Renfrew noted the end of day three and collecting your baker badge proves to yourself, and only to yourself, that you can do anything if you put your mind to it and that you will only accomplish something if you try.

"By the time it was over my mindset changed and I knew I was capable of doing anything," he said.



NEWSLETTER CLUB

Cadet Nathaniel Campbell, Grade 7, joined the Newsletter Club because he has worked on the yearbook at his former school.

"I feel I can help the group, help make the newsletter interesting," said Nathaniel, saying he is excited to write stories for the Newsletter.

Campbell, an avid reader, added he feels being in the club will help him with his language and writing skills as well.

Nathaniel is joined in the Newsletter Club by Cadet Nick Thompson.

Together Nathaniel and Nick went through past issues of The Loyalist, decided what they'd like to keep from that newsletter and then decided on some new features they feel will be interesting and showcase some of what life is like at RLA.

The Staff In The Spotlight story will highlight the work of some of the staff who aren't always recognized or staff who have made big achievements.

Advice For Your Life highlights some of the advice and wise words our staff share with students on a regular basis. The advice and counsel given by our ops staff not only helps students while they are at RLA, it is good advice "for your life."

Nick, a Grade 12 student, says he enjoys reading the advice column in the daily newspaper and thought sharing some of the good advice our staff have to offer would be a fun addition to the newsletter.

Nick says he joined the Newsletter Club because he thought it would help him with his university applications, noting he is interested in media studies or communications for post-secondary. The stories written by Nick and Nathaniel will feature past events, such as The Fall Exercise in this issue, or upcoming events like Mother Son Day. They also plan to write about student achievements, sports, and school activities.

One of the biggest changes for The Loyalist is that the newsletter is no longer monthly. It will be issued three times a semester. Because



clubs don't start until after the Fall Exercise, we were a bit late getting out our first issue which will result in an irregular schedule for this semester. The next issue will be out on December 8 followed by an issue just before final exams on January 19. In semester two the Loyalist will be issued March 8, April 26 and June 14.

Soon, the club will begin working on the yearbook for 2023-2024, choosing a design "theme" and beginning to plan out pages.



CROSS COUNTRY

CHALLENGING & MEMORABLE SEASON

By Nick Thompson

The Robert Land Academy cross country team has completed a challenging and memorable season, culminating in their journey to the SOSSA competition on October 18th 2023 at Fireman Park. This event was not only a test of their athletic abilities but also a testament to their unwavering determination.

The season leading up to SOSSA was filled with adversity. The team faced tough competition from other schools and had to endure some unpredictable weather conditions throughout the season. Races took place in a variety of settings, including muddy trails, hilly terrains, and under the scorching sun. Despite these obstacles, our cross country team demonstrated remarkable resilience. They trained tirelessly, not only physically but mentally, to prepare for the challenges ahead. They supported each other through the gruelling practices and difficult races, forging a tight-knit bond among team members.

"As a runner on this team, I can honestly say that the journey to SOSSA has been a test of our perseverance and a celebration of our teamwork. We've faced fierce competition and challenging conditions, but it's in these moments of adversity that we've grown the most. The support of my teammates and our incredible coach, John Ahlstedt, has been a driving force," said Stephan Paterson.



Continue Reading Next Page

The team's relentless efforts paid off as they secured their spots at the SOSSA competition. Stephan Paterson and Emaumal Kopatits ran the start controlling the centre lead of the race and controlled the pace for RLA, others including Nick Thompson, David Cheung and Andrew Kelly set behind and allowed for grouping of pace from there teammates

From a personal standpoint, I know as we head into the competition, we'll carry the lessons we've learned throughout the season with us. We're not just running to win; we're running to show what a team can achieve when we support each other and refuse to back down. I'm excited to see what we can accomplish at SOSSA, and I know that, win or lose, we'll come out of it as a stronger and more united team.

“Success in cross country isn't just about winning races; it's about pushing your limits, both as individuals and as a team. The challenges we've faced this season have only made us stronger,” said David Cheung after qualifying in a personal best run for SOSSA.

The SOSSA event proved to be the ultimate test. Runners from various schools converged for this prestigious competition. The course was demanding, with the event being at Fireman Park

Our team ran with heart and determination. At the end of the event, none of the RLA runners advanced to OFSAA, however they had a tremendous year and to compete at SOSSA is an amazing accomplishment.

The journey of the Robert Land Academy cross country team to the SOSSA competition exemplifies the spirit of determination and resilience. Their ability to overcome a challenging season and secure a place at SOSSA is a testament to their dedication to the sport and the unwavering support they offer each other.

The experience at SOSSA will serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for future seasons. The team can be proud of their accomplishments and their indomitable spirit, which will undoubtedly continue to drive them to even greater success in the world of high school cross country.





FALL EXERCISE STUDENT THOUGHTS

By Nathaniel Campbell

The Fall Exercise is a challenging exercise that Robert Land Academy does every year. This year the entire Academy marched almost 70 km over three days and finished at Queenston Heights to do a parade.

The New Mexico National Guard came to partake in the Fall Exercise. Sergeant Major Burkhart stated that “not even the New Mexico National Guard really do anything like the Fall Exercise.” All of RLA and other academies participated in three days for the Fall Ex. Students who had completed their first exercise received their red Baker Badge at the parade. Many students also got promoted after the exercise and earned more privileges.

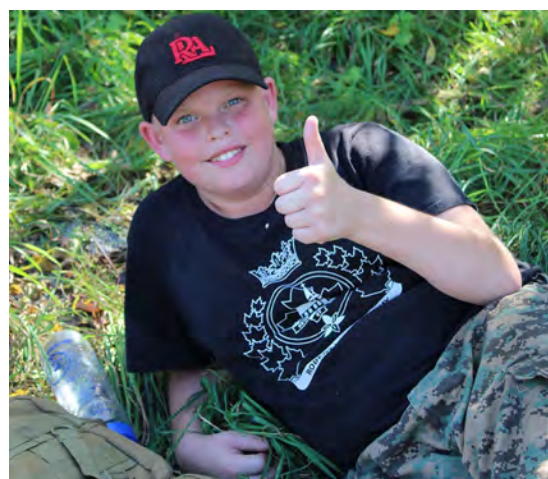
Double Barman Gagne received his grey baker badge, which means he has completed four Fall Exercises. Gagne stated he loved the scenery, and the fact that the hike on day two is at different locations each year, but they all play the same games on your mind.

Gagne explained we do the Fall Ex to develop resilience and teamwork, using the word “persevere” when speaking about the event.

Double Barman Jenkins has also completed four Fall Exercises and earned a grey bakers badge after this year’s event.

Jenkins shared his opinion, saying how the first day was the most challenging, adding he felt like he wanted to quit the first day halfway through but that it was “rewarding” when he finished.

For the Fall Ex several alumni came to take part and so did cadets from other military schools in the United States and everyone had an amazing dinner at the end thanks to the kitchen staff. During the



dinner, Captain Bowman in 20 fall exercises. Sergeant Major Burkhart of the New Mexico National Guard and Captain Dyson earned a gold Baker Badge for completing 15 Fall Exercises.

Lieutenant Sinclair a teacher who was leading the fast group in A coy was asked “when you finished how did you feel?” Lieutenant Sinclair stated she felt “accomplished”. She also said for her first Fall Exercise it felt good because she never knew where the end was.

Students all felt great when completing the Fall Exercise, that they had accomplished something and that it was over



A message from

Board of Governors Chair **Tim Hudak**

It has been a great start to this school year at Robert Land Academy. The students are busy with academics, sports and clubs, and of course they completed the annual Fall Exercise earlier this month. The Board of Governors is always proud of our students' accomplishments, and maybe most proud when they complete the Fall Exercise. This three-day, 70 km hike up and down the escarpment along the Bruce Trail, is both physically and mentally demanding. It is an accomplishment they should all be proud of and an experience that will build resiliency and give them the confidence to know they can do anything, especially if they work for it.

I was touched to see that our Alumni Association chose to honour LCol Ryan Smid, our former Headmaster who passed away this summer, by designing their Fall Ex shirts in his memory and providing one to every staff and student at RLA to wear on the final day of the exercise. His wife, Lisa Smid, accepted a shirt from Alumni chair James Paterson at the start of the third day and proudly walked with the school that day.

Now that the Fall Exercise is complete staff and students shift their focus to clubs, where our students have the opportunity to take part in a wide variety of sports and activities, from boxing and wrestling to robotics and Lego. New this year is the Newsletter/Yearbook Club. The students in this club have revamped this newsletter and added some new features while eliminating others. I'm glad to see the message from the Board of Governors made the cut.

I hope through this newsletter you get a glimpse of life at the Academy from the perspective of our students. I know it will showcase how special RLA is and the good work our staff are doing there.



Name & Rank: Lt John Ahlstedt

Position/Title: Training Officer and Elementary Phys-Ed Teacher

How long have you worked at RLA: 2 years

What do you like best about RLA: Coaching the boys.

What is your favourite food in the mess hall: Chicken wrap

Recently Lt Ahlstedt was recognized with a Coaching Excellence Award for his work at Robert Land Academy, through the Coaches Association of Ontario.

Lt Ahlstedt knew he had been nominated by Major Krywulak for the award, but said the phone call to tell him he'd won was a surprise.

"Humbled, is honestly the best word for it," is how he described feeling when he received the call.



Lt. Ahlstedt, who has been active in sports since he was a kid and has coached for the past 20 years, says sports is the best way to develop boys. It shows their true colours, and teaches them how to win, and how to lose.

"It puts them through the tough times and good times, and teaches them to handle all situations, really," said Lt. Ahlstedt. "Sports is the best metaphor for life."

Since joining RLA, Coach J has had some big moments coaching RLA students, such as seeing students who had never picked up a discus or javelin before attending RLA compete at the highest level of high school sports.

While those moments are special, Lt. Ahlstedt says a real win for him is seeing a student who had withdrawn at his previous school to the point of never leaving his room, playing basketball and being part of a team.

"John's ability to connect and empower each of his students to reach their potential sets him apart as a true leader" reads John's nomination. RLA students, and staff, are fortunate to have Lt. Ahlstedt on the team.



CSM Ian Davidson often asks the students "Would you rather have \$20 or \$50?"

CSM Davidson explains the \$20 or \$50 question is used as a symbol of the years of a student's life. The question is really would they rather enjoy the next 50 years with financial freedom and an education that will provide them with options or struggle financially and work for the rest of their lives to simply pay bills.

Davidson said the question shows students if they focus and make small sacrifices now, when money and freedom are already limited by age, they will create a life of options and freedom. Choosing freedom and fun now will take away those options causing the next 50 years to be decided by others and not themselves. A higher education and a career with a higher salary will almost always offer more options in how you spend your time and how you live your life.

Davidson says there are many talking points throughout the conversation, depending on the students' answers, but his goal when he asks this question is to show the students they always want the option to choose their future and what they do with their time.



A message from Family Guild Chair Lisa Thompson

Hello Academy Families!

With the Fall Ex and the first couple of months under their belts, I hope this message finds you and your boys all settled in for a brand-new school year at Academy! Hopefully, the boys are getting into the swing of their new routines and making the most of their time at the Academy.

Let's talk about the fun stuff – clubs and sports teams --Robert Land Academy offers so many unique opportunities for our boys! We've got a smorgasbord of varied options waiting for your kids. From epic matches on the sports fields and courts to creativity unleashed in clubs, there's something for everyone. Encourage them to dive in, make new friends, and discover their hidden talents!

Here's a little heads-up for all of the fabulous moms and all of the other fantastic women in our boys' lives – mark your calendars for our upcoming Mother-Son Day on November 4. It's a day of fun, laughter, bonding and memory making. Please watch for more details on the day and the official invite. We can't wait to see you all there!

Lastly, Family Guild meetings are hosted monthly, on a virtual basis. If any parents would like to get more involved with the Academy, please feel to reach out.

We are excited for another great year ahead!



Saturday, April 20, 2024

Please plan to join us in Niagara for our black-tie dinner when we will recognize the recipient of the John Brant Award, celebrate the Academy, and provide support for our students.

More details coming soon at trellis.org/rlgala



A message from

Academy Sergeant Major Paul Zahra

It's been a good start to the year. I'm Impressed by the way the Cadets came together as an Academy, and it showed on the Fall Ex.

Students helping, supporting and encouraging each other when they needed that extra boost. Our guests from down south were very impressed with your conduct. Good job.

We need to tighten up on drill. Drill is getting better each time we go on the parade square. If you are on remedial drill ask your company staff for extra help so that you can be taken off the remedial drill list. Once you are off remedial drill, you will be eligible for promotion and able to participate on stand down parades. We also have Remembrance Day fast approaching that we will need to practice for. There are some extra positions for that parade that I will be looking for if you are interested for a position let me know.

Did you know that we buried a time capsule where the head boys stands on parade square on June 18 2014. This June will be 10 years since we buried it. We are going to invite boys from that year to dig up the time capsule so they can read their letters and see the items the put inside the time capsule .

The Head boy, Parade Sergeant major and Aide de Camp are positions that need to be filled by the cadet body.

If you are interested in one of these positions write a memo addressed to the Headmaster and the ASM. In your memo describe what will make you a good candidate for one of these positions. Remember the top three positions are about giving back to the Academy. If you are just looking for extra privileges don't apply. If you want to be a role model and give back to the academy, please hand a letter in.

A description of the top three positions will be posted on the board in our companies.



A message from Alumni Committee Chair **James Paterson**

A Legacy of Values: From My Journey to My Son's Ascent at RLA

For over two years, I've had the privilege of serving as the Chair of the Alumni Committee at Robert Land Academy (RLA). It has been a fulfilling and humbling experience, supported by an exceptional team at RLA. As I prepare to step down from this role in November, I'd like to reflect on my 33-year journey with the Academy, the profound impact it had on my family, and the incredible opportunities it has presented.

Back in 1990, I made the pivotal decision to attend RLA. It was a choice born out of personal desperation, driven by a desire to graduate high school and a feeling of not quite fitting into the traditional public school environment. I was unimpressed with my fellow students and highly unmotivated. My previous experience in an American JROTC school had introduced me to the military environment, a world I was well-acquainted with due to my father's career as a major in the Canadian Armed Forces. It was through my father's work contacts that he discovered RLA, and when he asked if I wanted to check it out, I knew my life was about to change. With the savings he had painstakingly set aside, I embarked on my 11th year at RLA, following a year I had dropped out of. This decision altered the course of my life.

My year at RLA was a transformative experience. I learned not only about academics but also about life itself. It ignited a spark of resilience within me, improving my grades and instilling a newfound sense of self-discipline. When I returned to public school for my 12th year, I graduated with exceptional grades. Thanks to RLA, public school seemed easy in comparison.

Continue Reading Next Page

Several years later, I entered the Fire Service, and I found that the values I had imbibed at Robert Land Academy served me exceptionally well: Labour, Courage, Honour, and Loyalty. However, it was the value of commitment that truly stood out as the key to unlocking success in my career and beyond. I believed that anything was possible if one possessed unwavering commitment.

Fast forward to 31 years later, after a fulfilling and successful career, I now have two sons of my own. My association with the Alumni Committee and RLA presented an opportunity for Old Boys to revisit the academy under the command of Headmaster Ryan Smid, a dream I had pondered for years. I was delighted to bring my young boys with me, and their response was nothing short of enthusiastic. They were captivated by the uniforms, professionalism, physical fitness, and discipline at RLA and brought closer together as a family by the struggle and suffering that is the Fall Ex. However, it was my son, Stephan, who was profoundly impacted.

Comparing my boys to my younger self, they shine even brighter. They are tougher, faster, smarter, and more resilient. Stephan, in particular, was drawn to the school's aesthetics and operation, and he wholeheartedly embraced the uniforms, discipline, and emphasis on physical fitness. His current public school left him uninspired, and he saw RLA as the perfect opportunity to level up. Now into his second year at RLA, he is achieving more than I could have ever imagined.

From a young boy who idolized Top Gun, he now dreams of flying jets for the Canadian Forces. With his remarkable grades and aptitude, I wholeheartedly believe that he will see that dream come true. In fact, I'd venture to say that he might even soar into space one day, all thanks to the opportunities presented by RLA and the unwavering support of Col. Smid and the entire team.

In conclusion, my journey with Robert Land Academy has not only shaped my life but has now extended its transformative influence to the next generation. As I step down from my role on the Alumni Committee, I am immensely grateful for the opportunities and values this institution has provided. The legacy of commitment, resilience, and a commitment to excellence now carries forward, from one generation to the next, ensuring that the values of RLA continue to shape the lives of young individuals, just as it did for me.



